Using *They Say, I Say* to Draft an Introduction

It can be difficult to understand how to respond to other people’s arguments. *They Say, I Say* sets up a template to illustrate “moves” (key transitional phrases and terms) to help you summarize someone else’s claims, respond to their claims, and, ultimately, use their claims to set up your own argument.

In the introduction to *"They Say / I Say": The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein provide templates designed to ______________. Specifically, Graff and Birkenstein argue that the types of writing templates they offer ______________. As the authors themselves put it, “______________.” Although some people believe ______________, Graff and Birkenstein insist that ______________. In sum, then, their view is that ______________.

I [agree, disagree, have mixed feelings]. In my view, the types of templates that the authors recommend ______________. In addition, ______________. Some might object, of course, on the grounds that ______________. Yet I would argue that ______________. Overall, then, I believe ______________—an important point to make given ______________.

Consider the introduction below. The bolded words represent the “moves” that the author makes as she introduces one viewpoint, responds to the viewpoint, and presents her argument.

The term “vegetarian” tends to be synonymous with “tree-hugger” in __________.

**They see** vegetarianism as a cult that brainwashes its followers into eliminating an essential part of their daily diets for an abstract goal of “animal welfare.”

**However**, few vegetarians choose their lifestyle just to follow the crowd. **On the contrary**, many of these supposedly brainwashed people are actually independent thinkers, concerned citizens, and compassionate human beings. **For the truth is that** there are very good reasons for giving up meat. Perhaps the best reasons are to improve the environment, to encourage humane treatment of livestock, or to enhance one’s own health. **In this essay**, then, I will closely examine a vegetarian diet as compared to a meat-eater’s diet to show that vegetarianism is clearly the better option for sustaining the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Remember that you can use this template when discussing more than one source or viewpoint. The common viewpoint, for example, could be a certain approach or types of approaches advocated by scholars. The new viewpoint, then, could represent something left out of scholarship or a particular approach that you feel deserves more attention.